

Three levels of law-making

1. Create a three levels of law-making quiz

Devise a quiz about the three levels of law-making. Write a list of ten questions and answers. For example, you could ask questions like 'What are the three levels of government in Australia?' Find a partner and take it in turns to answer each other's questions.



2. Identify the responsibilities of the three levels of government

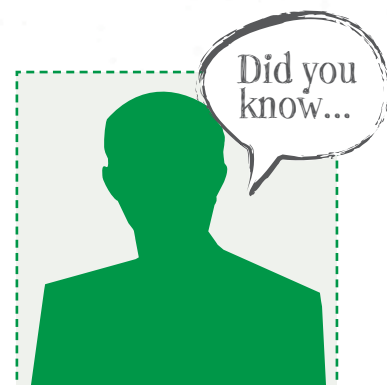
Find three newspaper articles that refer to services provided by one or more of the three levels of government in Australia. As a class, sort the articles into three categories—federal, state/territory and local. Discuss why each article relates to a particular level of government. For example, an article about Australian troops fighting overseas relates to defence, which is a federal government responsibility.

3. Discover who represents you

Find the names of the people who represent the area you live in:

- Mayor
- State/territory member of parliament
- Federal member of the House of Representatives
- One or more of your federal senators

Find or draw a picture of one of your representatives. Add a speech bubble to your picture with their name, position and an interesting fact about them.



4. Locate the three levels of government

On a map of Australia locate and mark where the following meet:

- Federal Parliament
- Your state or territory Parliament
- Your local council.

Illustrate your map with an image that represents each of these levels of law-making. For example, you could include a photograph of Parliament House or draw the emblem of your local council.

To find out more about federal Parliament, follow these links:

www.peo.gov.au/students/now_parl.html

www.peo.gov.au/multimedia/library/aph.html

To find out more about your state or territory Parliament and local councils, follow this link:

www.peo.gov.au/links/parliaments.html

••• **FEDERAL** •••••
•• **STATE/TERRITORY** ••
••••• **LOCAL** •••••



5. Write a letter to one of your representatives about an issue of concern to your local community

What action could be taken about this issue? Identify whether this is a local, state or federal matter. Address your letter to the appropriate representative; for example, your local councillor or federal member of parliament. Ask them to act on the issue you have identified.

Dear ??
I am concerned
about...
Please act!

6. Discuss whether Australia needs three levels of government. Write a proposal that supports the current system or argues for change

Consider issues such as:

- How practical would it be for a state government to be in charge of local matters: for example, library opening hours, policing dog registration or garbage collection?
- Are there some things that the federal government should be in charge of because they relate to the whole nation: for example, education or health services?

SECTION 109 Inconsistency of laws

When a law of a State is inconsistent with a law of the Commonwealth, the latter shall prevail, and the former shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be invalid.



7. Explore why federal law can over-ride state law.

Section 109 of the Australian Constitution deals with inconsistencies between federal and state law. The Constitution says that if the federal Parliament and a state Parliament both pass laws on the same subject, then the federal law over-rides the state law. Why do you think this provision was included in the Constitution? Do you think the federal Parliament should have this power? Why / why not?

8. Research an issue over which state/territory and federal governments have clashed

Some examples are drug injecting rooms, euthanasia, same sex marriage and mandatory prison sentencing. Should your state/territory parliament make laws about issues such as these or should this be a federal responsibility?